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ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Relationship Between Organizational Culture And Conflict Management Styles Of Managers And Experts****Shaghayegh Kiani Mehr***Department of physical Education, Ayatollah Amoli Branch, Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran*

Shaghayegh Kiani Mehr: Relationship Between Organizational Culture And Conflict Management Styles Of Managers And Experts

ABSTRACT

Today cultural clashes in any international project organization have led to an increased emphasis on preparedness on potential conflicts residing in cross-cultural collaboration. Cultural differences often result in varying degrees of conflict and require careful consideration. So the Objective of this research is the relationship between organizational culture and conflict management styles. The method of this study is descriptive – correlational. The statistical population consisted the staffs of physical education departments of Mazandaran province in Iran, including 151 that replied two questionnaires of OCAQ (Marshal Sashkin) and OCCI (Putnam & Wilson). The reliabilities of the questionnaires were estimated with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Organizational culture is 0.76 and conflict management styles are 0.87. Pearson statistical methods were used, there are not relationship between organizational culture with four of Conflict management styles (Collaboration, Compromise, Avoidance, Accommodation), only there is an inverse relationship between organizational culture with domination style of conflict management.

Key words: Organizational culture, conflict management, styles, managers, experts.**Introduction**

Today's trend of globalization brings up many chances of working together with people from different places of the world. Noticing the influence of this trend on the project-based industries, Chi and Levitt (2009) empirically examine a phenomenon of "boundary less careers" [2] in the context of international projects. People qualified for working in a project organization require not only high levels of technical skills and specialized expertise, but good sense of working with others of different backgrounds and dealing with various conflicts that often emerge from the coordination of many temporary workforces involved in the project. Since project goals, forms, and ways to deliver can be different in various industries and countries [41], international projects are distinctive cases maneuvering under multi-institutional systems that are activated by many different, while often conflicting, logics and practices [9]. This imposes huge challenges for coordination of those associated complex matters besides the requirements to workers and managers for processing large amounts of information [14]. Once the logics embedded in different cultures and divulging in practices by words, gestures, and symbols of all kinds that individuals employ for communication are different, the confusing and

misunderstanding lie in information acquisition and comprehension would surely sour the chance of making wise decisions. In consequence, conventional organizational designs that focus on "exception handling" addressing required capacity for information processing are insufficient for supervision and coordination of functionally interdependent activities [14]. In traditional view which was dominant about group behavior through 1930s and 1940s, conflict was regarded as a major obstacle for proper function and had to be avoided in all aspects at all costs. The more modern approaches towards conflict were initiated by human relations scientists. They emphasized conflict as an inevitable natural phenomenon in human interactions that should be managed properly [31]. The paradigm in which conflict was seen as a negative natural phenomenon was abolished soon. In fact, conflict can be seen as a creative force and the only thing that should be done is to exploit this driver to innovate more. Therefore, the need for innovation can be intensified when things are not being run smoothly. Hence, managers are advised "keeping team conflict alive" [22]. Generally speaking, conflict is both good and bad thing. However, the manner by which conflict is handled can use conflict constructively or destructively [12]. Nowadays, conflict is assessed in terms of functionality that can either contribute organizational growth or hinder the efficacy and

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performance [1]. However, the dysfunctional conflict among individuals has proved to have a negative impact on organizational efficacy and performance [42].

It has been shown that effective conflict management has a straightforward and positive impact on team cohesion. It also alleviates the negative impact of relationship conflict and task conflict on team cohesion. In reality, effective conflict management can change downside effect of relationship conflict and task conflict on team cohesion to some positive impacts [37]. Nevertheless, effective conflict management as an important part of leadership is possible only based on knowledge and awareness.

Conflict management styles:

Indeed, conflict can occur at various levels, from personal to societal. At each level, culture affects how individual(s) would perceive the situation of conflict and what the favorable approach people would take to handle the consequent social interaction or negotiation [7]. The success of conflict resolution relies on well managing the interaction of the handling approaches adopted by conflicting parties. According to Follett (1940), Blake and Mouton (1964), and Thomas (1976), Rahim and Bonoma (1979), the types of handling interpersonal conflict can be differentiated based on two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which one attempts to satisfy one's own concern. The second dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which one attempts to satisfy the concern of others. The identified two "concerns" are the basic building blocks of a theoretical framework named the Dual Concerns Model [32]. Moore (1996) and Groton (1997) adopted the model and specified the two concerns of personal level by satisfying (1) personal goals and (2) the relationships in

resolving conflicts in a project environment. Coupling the two concerns breeds five specific approaches of conflict handling [28, 29]. Shown in Fig. 2, the five approaches are described below.

1. Collaborating (CLB; high concern for both personal goals and relationships) approach involves openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both sides. It is associated with problem solving, which may lead to win-win solutions.

2. Dominating (DOM; high concern with personal goals but low concern with relationship) approach is identified with win-lose intention or with forcing behavior to win one's position.

3. Compromising (CMP; moderate concern for both personal goals and relationships) approach involves give-and-take whereby both sides give up something to break even the total lost and make a mutually acceptable decision.

4. Avoiding (AVD; low concern for both personal goals and relationships) approach is to put the problems on hold, and is sometimes associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, or sidestepping actions to reach a no-deal outcome.

5. Accommodating (ACM; low concern with personal goals but high concern with relationships) approach is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities with yielding attitude to satisfy the concern of the other side.

The five approaches are recognized in view of their reference behavioral attitudes in the process of resolving a conflict. These distinct strategic attitudes refer to people's intention toward conflicts: problem-solving, forcing, breaking-even, holding, and yielding [40]. Their effectiveness is upon deriving an atmosphere that can bring about wishful results. Table 1 presents the distinctions among the five approaches and their relationships with the handling attitudes.

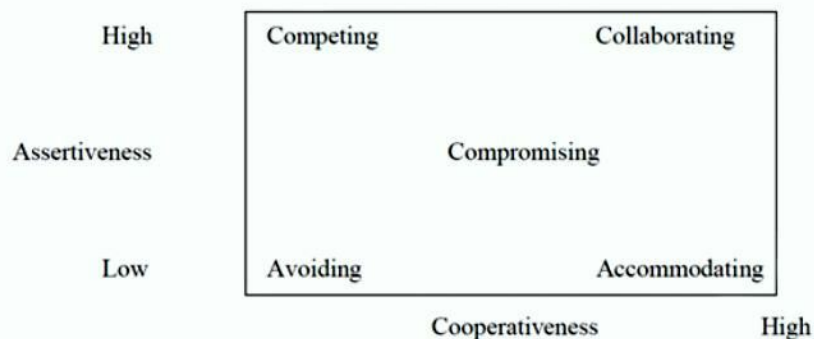


Fig. 1: Conflict grid [38]

Organizational culture:

Today we are much sensitive to the cultural diversity, and participants of any global project are well aware of many unknown, unforeseen, and uncertain conditions introduced by the elusive, intricate and difficult cultural clashes [25]. Organizational culture has been characterized as the “glue that holds organizations together” [16] and “isn’t just one aspect of the game – it is the game” [15]. Culture can support linkages between technology adoption and organizational growth [8]; it can be a critical success factor in implementing manufacturing strategy [3] and can play a crucial role in determining the success or failure of mergers and acquisitions [22]. Many unanswered questions remain regarding the meaning and content of organizational culture [4], the methods by which it should be measured [33] and, more fundamentally, the feasibility of managing culture and change [22], especially when attempting to operationalize and attain specific organizational goals. While debates around these issues continue, culture has been accepted as a “fact of organizational life” by managers and has become an integral aspect of many organizational development programs. Much of the researches on organizational culture have focused on descriptors of culture and frequently resulted in dimensions or typologies of culture [18, 19]. Certain types of organizational cultures, or certain styles of cultures, have been associated with either positive or negative outcomes for either the effectiveness of the organization or for individual employees within the organization [35]. The culture of an organization is shaped by many factors – some of which can be changed, and some of which might be intractable. Organizations adapt to their external environments by designing responsive structures and systems, adopting relevant technologies, and developing and harvesting members’ skills and qualities [11]. Though constrained by its environment, an organization makes a number of “choices” which, collectively, eventually define its culture. These choices are influenced by the philosophy of the organization, the values of top management, and the “assumptions” of founding principles and succeeding generations of organizational leaders [34]. In this research, the components of the organizational cultural that are used, are the Marshall Sashkin’s model: adapting to changes, achievement of goals, coordination of work groups, attention to clients, power of organizational culture [33].

Linking organizational cultural to conflict management:

Public preference of conflict modes are strongly correlated to cultural patterns [20]. A study has shown that manager’s general preference of how to deal with conflict are correlated to the Hofstede’s

cultural dimension that describe the characteristic of national culture [26]. There is a reasonable consistency between this study and Valentine’s. In contrast, Taiwanese-Chinese engineers with Chinese cultural dimensions prefer treating disputes through burdensome administration routine and similarly most documented disputes must be ultimately settled be central governmental authority [40]. Today, people of organizations inevitably face different cultural perceptions regarding work-related uncertainty resulted from the complexity of each activity and the interdependencies in between activities. This challenge would surely lead to an increased emphasis on preparedness of potential conflicts residing in such cross-cultural collaborations. Therefore, understanding how cultural differences affect people’s conflict management style could provide useful knowledge in real practices. Referring to many existing studies as described below, we propose that the salience of cultural orientations should affect the nature of people’s conflict management styles. In addition, the different dominant styles representing groups of individuals’ behaviors as a whole can be important indicators revealing the characteristics of different organizational cultures. So in this research, the researcher expects that the organizational culture show some degree of correlation with conflict management styles.

H1: Organizational culture will have relationship with conflict management styles.

This study is directed by following research questions:

Q1. What are the common conflict management styles chosen by manager and expert of the physical education offices of Mazandaran province?

Q2. What are average of the organizational culture of manager and expert of the physical education offices of Mazandaran province?

Materials And Methods

The method of this research is descriptive and correlational survey that collects of data took place from field studies. Statistical population of this study included all managers and experts of physical education departments in Mazandaran province were equal to 151 people. To apply of the research, the questionnaires sent to the managers and experts of physical education departments in Mazandaran province, which 139 person had filled the questionnaires completely. For data collection, were used the two questionnaires with valid standardized, organizational culture questionnaire of Marshall Sashkin (1996) and conflict management questionnaire of Putnam and Wilson (1991). The reliability of these two questionnaires was obtained with Cronbach's alpha, organizational culture questionnaire was 0.76 and conflict management questionnaire was 0.87. For the analysis of the data,

descriptive and inferential statistics methods are used. Calmograph Smironoph test identified that the data have normal distribution, so parametric test (Pearson $P < 0.05$) was used for analyzing research data and assumptions. Analyzing was performed by SPSS16 soft ware.

Results:

Results presented in Table 1 indicate that the number of females staffs are 49 (35.3 percent) and the number of male are 90 (64.7 percent). Employees with 5 years experience 35 (25.2 percent), 6-10 years 31 (22.3 percent), 11-15 years 23 (16.5 percent) and with an experience of more than 15 year, 50 people (36 percent). Number of employees that their field of study is physical education are 75 (51.6 percent) and non-physical education are 67 (48.2 percent).

Table 1: Distributions and frequency percent

		Frequency	Frequency percent
Gender	Female	49	35.3%
	Male	90	64.7%
History	5 years	35	25.2%
	6-10	31	22.3%
	11-15	23	16.5%
	More than 15	50	36%
Field	Physical Education	72	51.8%
	Non-physical Education	67	48.2%

Figure 1 shows the average of conflict management styles of managers and experts of Physical Education organizations in Mazandaran province. Collaboration 3.9468, Compromise 3.4101, Avoidance 2.8861, Accommodation 3.1712, Domination 3.0894.

Figure 2 shows the average of organizational culture that is 3.3410 and the average of components of organizational culture, respectively, adapting to changes 3.2734, achieving of goals 3.2902, coordinating of work groups 3.2494, attention to clients 3.6499, and power of organizational culture 3.2422.

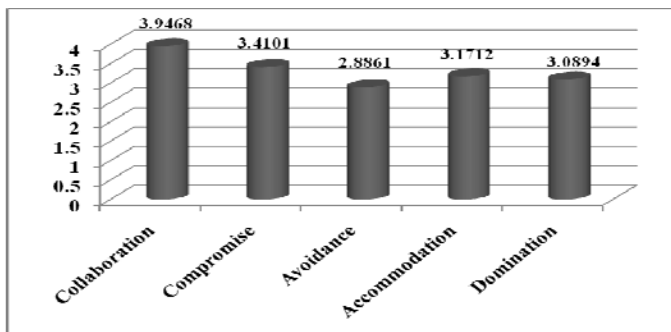


Fig. 1: Average Conflict Management Styles across Survey Respondents

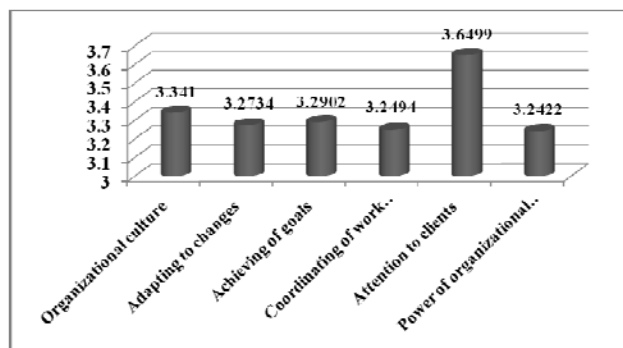


Fig. 2: Average of organizational culture and its components

The inferential analysis in Table 2 reveals that there are not relationships between organizational culture and collaboration style, organizational culture

and compromise style, organizational culture and avoidance style and also organizational culture and accommodation in managers and experts of physical

education organizations in Mazandaran province in significant level 0.05. But there is an inverse relationship between organizational culture and style in conflict management in a reversed relationship between organizational culture and domination style of conflict management in significant level of 0.05. It means that if organizational culture is less for resolve conflicts, domination style is used more.

The inferential analysis in Table 3, illuminate there are not relationships between components of organizational culture and collaboration style, between components of organizational culture and

compromise style, between components of organizational culture and avoidance style and also between components of organizational culture and accommodation. There are not relationships between adapting to changes and domination style, between attention to clients and domination style and also power of organizational culture and domination style. There are inverse relationships between achieving of goals and domination style at the 0.05 level and also between coordinating of work groups and domination style at the 0.01 level.

Table 2: Correlation between organizational culture and conflict management styles

		Collaboration	Compromise	Avoidance	Accommodation	Domination
Organizational Culture	Sig	0.435	0.883	0.913	0.773	0.017
	r	0.067	-0.013	-0.009	-0.025	-0.201

Table 3: Correlation between elements of organizational culture and conflict management styles

		Collaboration	Compromise	Avoidance	Accommodation	Domination
Adapting to Changes	Sig	0.082	0.963	0.242	0.450	0.938
	r	0.148	0.004	0.100	0.065	-0.007
Achieving of goals	Sig	0.161	0.567	0.894	0.389	0.018
	r	0.119	0.049	0.011	-0.074	-0.200*
Coordinating of Work Groups	Sig	0.499	0.687	0.072	0.052	0.002
	R	-0.058	-0.034	-0.153	-0.165	-0.257**
Attention to Clients	Sig	0.533	0.613	0.827	0.327	0.181
	r	0.053	-0.043	0.019	0.084	-0.114
Power of Organizational Culture	Sig	0.527	0.774	0.774	0.938	0.092
	r	-0.054	-0.025	-0.025	-0.007	-0.143

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Conclusion:

In this paper, we attempt to elaborate the linkage to the manifestations of organizational culture upon the ways of handling conflicts. Based on research findings, organizational culture with an average 3.3410 indicates that the level of culture in this society is moderate. With structuring of culture in organizations, training of managers and experts in recognition of the desired culture can achieve more efficiency and effectiveness of sport organizations Iran. The averages of organizational culture's components indicate attention to client the managers and exports is higher than the other component of organizational culture. In studying of research findings about conflict management styles and based on theoretical principles, it becomes clear that skills in controlling conflict is a decisive factor in the effectiveness of the organization and if could well recognize and led the conflict it can use as the one of the most organizational development tools. In contrast, the lack of proper understanding of conflict and undesirable abusing of domination ,avoidance, accommodation styles provoke noisome results including decreased cooperation, making pressure and strangulation atmosphere, cover up the causes of differences and lack of resolve, resilience and persistence, adumbrating of results, the lack of achieving of principle agreement and the reducing of

performance of organization. Optimal using of each conflict management styles depends on the values and beliefs and culture of the organization. Among the styles that studied in this research, Collaboration style is a best solution because for solving the problems exhibit the solutions that have benefits for all. This style with an average 3/9468 is the most usable style in the study population. Compromise style with average 3.4101 is the next rank. Collaboration and compromise styles of conflict management styles are the best styles in conflict management. At these styles individuals are looking for solutions and there is no winner and no loser, and people solve the problems with intellectual and sharing their resources. These results are matched with results of Rahim (1983), Kozan (1989), and Blake and Moton (1989), Jackson (1999) and are not matched with result of Slabbert (2004). Accommodation style is 3.1712 and domination style is 3.0894 Accommodation and domination styles are exactly opposite each other. In accommodation style, individual prefer benefits the other side's more than owns, but in domination style, the individual seeks to provide own target.

Avoidance style is 2.886. It's the lowest average in the conflict management styles and the last style usable in the statistical community. So it can be inferred that the managers and experts of physical education departments of Mazandaran province have

no positive attitude about this style. The inferential analysis by showed that there is no significant relationship between organizational culture and collaboration style and also there are not relationship between components of organizational culture and collaboration style. Work group one the component of organizational culture shows cooperation and coordination in people has a lower average, but collaboration has the most average than other styles of conflict management and in theoretical statement much evidences are available confirms that cooperative strategies is the most prudent way to reach it. Probably high level of collaboration style for conflict resolution is causing of the intimacy has been observed in the atmosphere of organization. There is no significant relationship between organizational culture and compromise style and also there are not relationship between components of organizational culture and compromise style. This style is the most common strategy for conflict resolution in organizations that are used to communicate. No relationship can be the results of intimacy and friendly atmosphere that exists in these organizations. It's the same in avoidance style and accommodation style with no relationship. There is an inverse relationship between organizational culture and domination style. It means if organizational culture is lower; the use of domination style is more. Also there are inverse relationships between achieving of goals the component organizational culture and domination and coordinating of work groups and domination style. People would be in competition with the each other in domination style and attempt to resolve their own problems and these are not in aligned with teamwork, individual and group goals that are aspects of organizational culture. In the other hand if achieving of goals and coordinating of work groups are more, using of domination style of conflict management is less. There is not significant relationship between organizational culture and four styles of conflict management, which could indicate other causes except organizational culture indirectly affected on conflict management styles. Also, this study was conducted sport organizations for the first time, in the other research statistical community were non-sporting societies. Another cause that can be noted is that there were peoples with degrees in non physical education, which almost half of the community formed. These people among the educated people in the field of physical education with differences in attitudes that related to sports can affect the results of this study that more research does not exist like this dichotomy. Finally, according to study results and findings of similar studies in this case, can say that managers of sports organizations with recognizing the culture of the organization and appropriate cultural, make the basis for the development of individual indicators of organizational culture among its members that each of which, somehow interacts

with conflict and available choice of conflict management style, that provides ways of growth and development of the sport of the country.

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